

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**INQUIRY INTO THE REMOVAL OF SENIOR SCHOOL
ALLOCATION FUNDING FOR YEAR 11 AND 12 COURSES
AT DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT NAREMBEEN
TUESDAY, 8 JUNE 2010**

SESSION SEVEN

Members

**Hon Giz Watson (Chair)
Hon Philip Gardiner (Deputy Chair)
Hon Liz Behjat
Hon Ken Travers
Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich**

Hearing commenced at 2.57 pm

DE RUITER, MR EDWARD

Principal,

Mukinbudin District High School,

sworn and examined:

The CHAIR: On behalf of the committee I welcome you to the meeting this afternoon. Before we begin I am required to ask you to take either an oath or affirmation.

[Witness took the affirmation.]

The CHAIR: Please state the capacity in which you appear before the committee.

Mr De Ruiter: I am principal of the school.

The CHAIR: You will have signed a document entitled “Information for Witnesses”. Have you read and understood this document?

Mr De Ruiter: Yes.

The CHAIR: Proceedings this afternoon are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist Hansard, please be aware of the microphone and try to talk directly into it. I think you have it in the right spot there.

Mr De Ruiter: Hopefully.

The CHAIR: I remind you the transcript will become a matter for the public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today’s proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in private session. If the committee grants your request, any public or media in attendance will be excluded from the hearing. Please note that until such time as the transcript of your public evidence is finalised, it should not be made public. This prohibition does not, however, prevent you from discussing your public evidence once you leave the hearing. Thank you for attending. As you are aware, the committee is inquiring into the government’s decision to cease to provide senior school allocation funding for years 11 and 12 courses at 21 district high schools in WA, including Mukinbudin District High School, and we welcome your input to the inquiry. Would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr De Ruiter: I think the context of Mukinbudin District High School needs to be considered in this, and that is that we actually provide education for years 8 to 12 through SIDE. We do not have face-to-face teaching for years 8 to 12. We just do not have the teacher facility there, and I think that is indicative of many district high schools. Each district high school has its own set of circumstances that surround what happens at the district high school. Because we are on a bit of a spur line, it is very difficult to attract high school teachers there. Our numbers are very low, and so for a high school teacher to come out to Mukinbudin would not enhance their prospects in the future. So, we basically make do with the teacher FTE that we have got, and we have some teachers who are willing to help supervise the students from years 8 to 12 in SIDE. So our situation, therefore, in the senior school allocation is somewhat different.

The CHAIR: Could you give us the numbers at the school?

Mr De Ruiter: In the high school?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr De Ruiter: In the high school we have one year 8; two sometimes three year 9s, and that is because there is a person who comes and goes at different times of the year; six year 10s; and two year 11s.

The CHAIR: And no year 12s?

Mr De Ruiter: No year 12s at this stage. We had year 12s last year, but they moved on and there has just been that sort of gap year, if you like. There was one year 11 last year, but they moved out of the district because their father got employment elsewhere.

The CHAIR: I am sorry, I interrupted you. Was there more you were wanting to say?

Mr De Ruiter: I was trying to put the context of Mukinbudin in there; that because of its context it is a very different situation from many others that you have probably spoken to over the course of time.

The CHAIR: It is interesting how much difference there is between the different districts. If you have concluded your opening statements, I might carry on with some questions here.

Mr De Ruiter: That is fine.

The CHAIR: So, for the record, the school has lost senior school allocation funding; is that correct?

Mr De Ruiter: Yes, we got a letter on that in December last year.

The CHAIR: What does that equate to in loss of FTE, I assume it would be?

Mr De Ruiter: Again, it is hard to put that into a set context because in 2009 a group of district high schools in the Midlands district actually tried to get together some sort of VET program. Because individually each school is too small to be able to put together a very good VET program, we try to do a consortium of schools. So we actually applied, therefore, for our years 11 and 12 kids to be under the VET program. So the funding there was different from what it would be if you were going with the TEE aspect of it. So, we have had varying funding over the years. In the three years that I have been there, 2008 and 2009 were two very different years: it was 0.18 in 2008 and 0.36 in 2009. Because we were trying to go for the VET program it actually doubled our FTE senior schooling allocation for that session. So, they have been very different, but it was 0.18 in 2008 and, obviously, nothing this year.

The CHAIR: Is it possible—you might need to take this on notice—to indicate that allocation since it started in 2006?

Mr De Ruiter: Since 2006?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr De Ruiter: No, I would have to go back through our records to find that year.

The CHAIR: Would you mind providing that?

Mr De Ruiter: So that is for 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

[Supplementary Information No E1.]

The CHAIR: And with the student numbers at the same time.

deru: And the student population. Where would I need to send it?

The CHAIR: I am sorry, to Renae.

Mr De Ruiter: Just an email?

The CHAIR: That would be great; thank you. What was the school using the senior school allocation funding for?

Mr De Ruiter: What we did was grouped all the FTE for years 8 to 12 together so that we could then have all the students suitably supervised by teachers. That was the course we took there. By

putting it altogether we could actually put enough FTE into it to get a full-time teacher to be able to supervise those students. And also, because in the years 8 to 10 area you get a certain allocation for curriculum access as well, we could then spread that across the school. Had we been in a different situation of most district high schools where years 8 to 10 still have face-to-face teaching, we would not have had that amount of FTE to spread across. So, by having that amount of FTE, especially the curriculum access for years 8 to 10, which is one FTE, it gave us enough to be able to have supervision right across the board. We actually changed it slightly this year because of the lack of senior schooling. Because we have two very able students in year 11, minimal supervision is all they require, and so we do not have to, with the duty of care and that, because they are pretty responsible kids we do not have to have someone with them all the time. So we have them in a separate room this year; whereas last we had all the years 8 to 12 together. It is varied each year depending upon the circumstances of the school. And, as I said, we have been fortunate—unfortunate in one way but fortunate in another—that we have still been able to provide for the years 8 to 12 kids, even without face-to-face teaching; they have the FTE through the curriculum access to do that.

The CHAIR: And the impact of the removal of the allowance?

Mr De Ruiter: In my school in the way we are currently set up, it will not have a huge impact because of the years 8 to 10 situation. I think we are pretty unique in that. So, for us it has not had a huge impact and we have been able to cover it quite adequately. For other schools, of course, it would be very different.

The CHAIR: What did you understand the purpose of the senior school allowance funding was when it was initially allocated?

Mr De Ruiter: I was actually at Gingin District High School at the time and more involved with the primary side of the school, but from the discussions we had at an admin level, it was basically to enable years 11 and 12 students to still get an education within their local community, as that was when the change went from raising the school leaving age. So, the allocation was there to enable those students to still be educated at their local school.

The CHAIR: Was there any information that this funding was transitional?

Mr De Ruiter: To my knowledge, no.

The CHAIR: The department has advised the committee that the money was allocated to assist in the planning required for transition and support for the introduction of new legislation. Does that reflect your understanding of the situation?

Mr De Ruiter: Not completely. I thought it was actually there for us to be able to take years 11 and 12. I did not realise the transitional side was there. Because years 11 and 12 had come in, district high schools had the opportunity to take on years 11 and 12. I suppose the natural assumption was that that meant that while we had years 11 and 12, the funding would be there; and we were not assuming that.

The CHAIR: I think you have already gone through yours numbers of your enrolments for the different years currently. Did you have any students using SIDE funding?

Mr De Ruiter: What do you mean by SIDE funding?

The CHAIR: The distance education funding within the school?

Mr De Ruiter: You have lost me. Because our kids go to our school, there is no—

The CHAIR: You have not got any; okay.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes. You mean the isolated students?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr De Ruiter: No. Because we provide education at our school for the kids within our region, they do not get it at our school. They do get it if they go to another school, however.

The CHAIR: Okay.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Mr De Ruiter, can I just ask you: in your submission to the committee you make some reference about district high schools and years 11 and 12 in district high schools. We have sort of been led to believe that this is some recent event, that district high schools have had years 11 and 12 only in more recent times. Is that your understanding?

Mr De Ruiter: Since the change of the school leaving age, years 11 and 12 became prevalent in district high schools. We did have a couple at Gingin prior to that who studied through SIDE, but there was no allocation or anything for them at that stage.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: But are you aware of years 11 and 12 students in other district high schools in earlier times?

Mr De Ruiter: In some of the more isolated areas, like I was at Meekatharra in 2000 and we had a couple who, again, went through SIDE with no allocation or anything like that. So, where there has been a need, there has been the provision with no sort of funding to my knowledge for it.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Even at Gingin, for example, you would accept, were there some years 11 and 12 already there prior to the changes to the increase in school leaving age?

Mr De Ruiter: Two of them.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes; okay. And so this additional money was in fact to cater for the additionality, or those students who otherwise would have left the system but were to stay in the system under the new provisions; is that correct?

Mr De Ruiter: Yes.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: That is your understanding of it.

Mr De Ruiter: That is my understanding of it, yes.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: I understand at Mukinbudin there is a private school as well as your school.

Mr De Ruiter: There was a Christian school there up until the end of 2008. It got to the stage where they could not find teachers to come there.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: The same problem as before.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: So, all the years 11 and 12 to which you refer are all those in the district.

Mr De Ruiter: No; all those that come to the school. There are more in the district who go to private schools predominantly.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: I beg your pardon; yes.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes. They can be catered for in the district outside of going to private schools. We basically have them at school, yes.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Are any years 11 and 12 who are doing home education in Meekatharra that you know of?

Mr De Ruiter: Mukinbudin.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Meekatharra, did I say? I mean Mukinbudin.

Mr De Ruiter: In Meekatharra there would be quite a few, I think; but in Mukinbudin, no. The two year 11s that we enrolled for this year were considering doing home schooling but because of our

situation I said, “No; look they can come to the school. We can supervise them at the school and we can provide some better facilities than they would have at home.” One of them is on satellite and so you are not sure what your internet connection and that is going to be like with that all the time; whereas we are pretty consistent with our internet connection; and, again, just things like that.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I note in your submission you make mention that there is no school bus from Mukinbudin to Merredin and if there was, it would probably far outweigh the cost of providing the senior school allocation.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: But the other issue I am interested in is the point that you make: that a number of students in your area, you are of the view, are just not going to go; if you do not offer a course at Mukinbudin they will not take up a course?

Mr De Ruiter: No; that would be right.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am interested in exploring that. Does that include if there was a bus to Merredin, would that then become an option? Or you are saying that even with a bus, it is —

Mr De Ruiter: The bus to Merredin would be very similar to the bus situation from Wyndham to Kununurra. That would be the distance they would be travelling. I think what the kid had in the paper the other day is pretty indicative of what would be happening there as well. It would just get to the stage where you would just be travelling for too long too far; because we would also have kids coming from the other side of Muka first, so they catch the bus into Muka and then the bus into Merredin; and then vice versa to go back home again. And on a daily basis that would just become far too wearing for the kids.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Right. So, you are convinced that if you cannot offer the courses at Mukinbudin, those kids will just miss out on an education.

Mr De Ruiter: One or two may do something a little bit differently. Until the situation arises, you cannot be 100 per cent sure of any of that sort of a situation. But I actually surveyed the parents last year to find out what their destination schools would be, should we not be able to cope. I was looking more at years 8 to 12 at that stage because our numbers are pretty low right the way through; and the majority of them indicated that they would either leave the district or send their kids to a private school. There is a perceived reputation of Merredin by a number of the parents around our district.

[3.13 pm]

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Perceived as in negative?

Mr De Ruiter: As in negative, yes. With all respect to Merredin, a lot of that again is their inability to attract quality teachers as well for a number of different circumstances. You seem to get past the great divide, places like York and Toodyay that are still within easy commuting distance of Perth seem to be able to attract teachers quite easily, and it is when you start getting further out that teaching becomes a bit harder to digest, unless you are along the coastal strip.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I guess in those other towns you mentioned there is a lifestyle choice that teachers can take that can allow them to have an urban lifestyle in a rural setting.

Mr De Ruiter: We were one of the first towns to go down that path of losing, shall we say, the established teachers in the town and not having anyone stay close. I know that places like Narembreen and Bruce Rock for instance still have the established teachers there at the moment, it will be interesting to see what happens once they leave. By “established” I mean married to farmers and therefore still continue with their teaching and that sort of situation, so they have not had to attract many new teachers in. It will be interesting to see what happens when they have to attract the new teachers in, whether that same story will occur.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Is that linked to that ageing of the teaching population? In Mukinbudin you actually had a group of those teachers who have been there at the school for 20 or 30 years and they have now retired.

Mr De Ruiter: We had a group of those teachers plus we had graduates who did their two or three years and then had an opportunity to move out, but because our numbers started to decline, it was very hard to attract new people in because they could see that there was not really a future for them in teaching by going to Mukka. It became competitive to get back to Perth or places like that, they would not be able to put the same application forward and that is becoming an issue very much in the country area.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: You are suggesting that that will start to have an impact into other towns in the Wheatbelt.

Mr De Ruiter: I am saying that there is a possibility that will happen. I am hoping that some of the other communities will actually learn from that experience and start looking now at trying to attract people in the town and different ways in which they can do it. I believe that if there is more motivation for people to come out there, I think we have to work with the universities and things like that—I know we are getting right off the track of what the committee is about—but we need to look at doing all those sorts of things in order to be able to maintain district high schools.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: One of our terms of reference is “any other relevant matter” and I guess what you are alluding to here is, to me, another relevant matter in terms of if you do not have those resources and those add-ons and there are signals that these schools do not have a future, what you are suggesting to me is that that is going to make sure that they do not have a future because you will not get the teachers and the students.

Mr De Ruiter: I do not think the schools do not have a future. I think there is a very viable future for these schools; it just has to be looked at differently.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Do they need a reclassification? Is that a part of the solution?

Mr De Ruiter: No, I think that would add to the problem because if you take away the high school area for Mukinbudin, Narembeen, Bruce Rock or those areas, you then lose a lot more attraction to the town, like the shire —

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am not necessarily talking about getting rid of the high school component; I am talking about a reclassification of the schools so that when they do go to that next level of promotion, their service within the district high schools will actually count for more rather than less so that it is built into the transferability structure.

Mr De Ruiter: The transfer points system.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes.

Mr De Ruiter: The transfer points system works well if there is a school that you want to go to and that actually has a vacancy. If they do not have a vacancy, it does not matter how many transfer points you have. So there are all those within the system, and it is a huge system. I would hate to have the job of trying to move people around. I am sorry if we got off the track there.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Mr De Ruiter, you have 11 high school students. How many primary school students do you have?

Mr De Ruiter: Eighty-two and that is including kindy and preprimary.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: So in kindy to year 7 you have 82.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Have those numbers dropped over the past three or four years, or is that growing?

Mr De Ruiter: The bulk of our students are in K–3 at the moment. It is just one of the anomalies of Mukka at the moment. It is those parents whose are getting most concerned about the future for Mukinbudin District High School because they are the ones who responded most favourably to the survey saying, “We’d love to keep our kids at Mukka; if not, we’re going to start looking at moving out of the town now.” So it is that dilemma that we have there. We have this sort of from year 5 upwards spot at the moment where we are not going to get many people moving into the high school, but after that we can see the numbers building up in the high school again, not to great numbers but —

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: No, but it is on the rise.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes, a more viable alternative as a high school.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Just back to what you were talking about earlier with Hon Ken Travers, could we read into what you described that the possibility that your model at Mukinbudin is the future model of education in regional Western Australia; that is, the model, as I understand you are talking about, being the SIDE delivery with supervision in the school being a more cost-effective yet equal quality way of educating our students in the country?

Mr De Ruiter: I think the SIDE model with more add-ons with ICT and that sort of stuff. The potential for ICT is huge and it is only when we need to start tapping into it that we actually start tapping into it. I think that SIDE itself will be looking very differently at how it provides a service out to the country as well. I think the SIDE model works very well. There are certainly quality teachers in SIDE. The programs at the moment because they are still very much booklet-type programs are a bit dated but if we can improve the ICT and improve the way in which programs are delivered through ICT, then they could be updated very easily as well and become much more interactive for the kids and that sort of stuff. That scenario I think we need to start exploring—how we can best educate kids who want to stay and whose parents want them to stay in their local community.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Because that solves the problem, does it not? That model that you were kind of alluding to —

Mr De Ruiter: It helps to solve the problem.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: The development of it will help to solve the problem because the reason why we need our regional schools is because of the proximity to the parents and the support and the special needs and all that kind of thing.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes, it will help to solve the problem. The only trouble is: where does the funding come from for that to work that way?

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Is that SIDE model more expensive than having teachers doing it directly or less expensive?

Mr De Ruiter: I really have not gone into looking at that aspect of it at the moment. All I know at the moment is that SIDE charges our eight to 10 kids the same—the maximum you can charge—which is \$235 and then at year 11 and 12 it is per unit. Basically, the funding model there is still the same.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Is it full cost recovery, though, or is it being cross-subsidised by the department?

Mr De Ruiter: Year 8 to 10, I am not sure. Because I made the arrangement with SIDE and the parents that SIDE would book the parents direct for the courses for year 11s this year, I have not seen the costings for that.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Sorry, explain to me what we are talking about here. When you say \$200, is that per course?

Mr De Ruiter: No it is \$235 per student.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Right. Do they then pay school fees to the school or is that in lieu of school fees?

Mr De Ruiter: The arrangement that we have with SIDE—I think SIDE does it differently with different schools—is that we basically charge the kids school fees, SIDE then bills us for that and we pay that but we on-pay that to SIDE. That is for year 8 to 10.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: That is the \$200 —

Mr De Ruiter: The \$235, yes, which is the maximum you can charge for students, except when you then start doing some bits and pieces, like in home economics you can charge for different consumables and those sorts of things. But generally—I always get costs and contributions mixed up—I think the contribution side of it is \$235 and then you can get the charges on top of that.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: But that is in place of school fees; they are not then paying a school fee to you on top of that, are they?

Mr De Ruiter: No. That is year 8 to 10, though.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The fees that are getting charged to year 11s are only the fees of a similar scale; they are not course delivery fees.

Mr De Ruiter: As I said, I deliberately let SIDE negotiate that with the parents. That was the deal for bringing the kids on board this year. We could provide the supervision but we were not going to be paying for SIDE courses—that was the parents' responsibility.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: As part of that, SIDE then provides all the materials; you do not provide any materials to the school?

Mr De Ruiter: No, we do not need to provide any now.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It is all provided through the SIDE program.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes, even metalwork, woodwork and stuff like that; if there are certain tools they need, they come up as part of the deal as well.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: There were a number of good points I think you made in your submission. I want to get your view more on this particular paragraph —

In this time when a great focus is being placed on the closing of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students the removal of the Senior Schooling Allocation may result in these students not being afforded the opportunity of completing the formal education years thereby ... exacerbating an already identified problem in Indigenous education.

The Indigenous component of Mukinbudin students —

Mr De Ruiter: Ten per cent. We actually had one Indigenous student complete year 12 last year, which was huge. She would not have gone anywhere else to do year 11 and 12.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: A girl. The girls were easier —

Mr De Ruiter: There is no denying that, but at the same time we have a —

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It is a great achievement.

Mr De Ruiter: It is a great achievement and we have one year 10 Aboriginal boy now. We are working very closely with youth pathways at the moment to see what the best alternative is for him next year. We do not necessarily encourage kids to stay at Mukka for year 11 and 12. Some kids can handle that quite easily because they already have that inbuilt in their system of how they do it. But out of the year 10s this year, two of them would probably really easily handle year 11 and 12 by SIDE and I am talking TEE SIDE here, no other form of SIDE. We have a couple whom I am starting to work with SIDE because we might be able to go down some of the coursework and the

VET-type stuff with them through SIDE. Then there are another couple of kids who will probably go to Cunderdin Ag from there anyway. We do not discourage kids from staying at Mukka but we do not encourage it either. We put it out there for the parents and the kids to see and from there it is a case that they make the decision.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Whether you discourage or encourage is an assessment you make for the best interests of the student or is there an influence coming from the department which is encouraging you to take a particular view on that?

Mr De Ruiter: As I said right from the start, we are a bit unique in that the senior school allocation has not had a huge effect on us, so we can take it purely from the effect it is going to have on the kid and what is in the best interests of the kid; we do not need to worry about other aspects from there. We have a discussion with the parents and the kids and from there and say that these are your options, which one do you want to choose and we will help you —

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: So they are genuine options you present.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Just with the Indigenous component, I know I alluded to this question before about what numbers are hidden that we are missing in the year 11 and year 12 total cohort in the district. Is it your view that the Indigenous are really fulfilling their year 11–year 12 obligations or are they giving it away and are just falling off the table?

Mr De Ruiter: I do not have any figures with me at all on that aspect of it, but I do know that the participation directorate has worked closely with a lot of different communities and not just with Indigenous but with non-Indigenous as well. I could not truthfully answer that with any numbers or anything like that, but I think that every school endeavours the best it can to make sure that Indigenous students get as good an education as they can get and achieve as much as they can achieve as well. It is only when attendance becomes a huge issue that they start to fall by the wayside, but that is the same for all students, not just Indigenous. It is the attendance issues earlier on the track that make what happens in year 11 and 12 more prevalent, I think.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Based on the records that you have then because you go from K through to 12, you must have some idea of those which were going through who are not continuing school but you know are still families in the district.

Mr De Ruiter: Apart from a couple of attendance problems again, basically all our kids go through from K–10 and then we work out with them from there because there are three different pathways you can take for year 11 and 12. Most of them then take the pathway of either going into an apprenticeship or going into a combination of TAFE and work placement. Some of them, like Breanna last year, chose to stay and do year 12. We are encouraging the year 10 student at the moment to probably go into a work placement and TAFE because he does not have the same aptitude at this stage.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Just finally, how many students do you have doing the VET?

Mr De Ruiter: Unfortunately, in our situation we cannot have anyone doing VET because in order for TAFE to work with you and all the other bits and pieces there are so many other impinging factors. That is why we tried to get that consortium of different high schools going a couple of years ago so that we had the numbers. You have to have about 20 kids to make it really worthwhile and make it feasible for TAFE to want to be involved as well. So we do not actually run VET as such, if kids really want to do a VET course, we have to encourage them to go elsewhere.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: But can you not run a VET program by having your year 11s doing SIDE on the essentials—English and maybe mathematics or something—and then going out and doing work in Elders or Landmark or an engineering firm or a machinery firm?

[3.30 pm]

Mr De Ruiter: We can do that sort of combination. That is not actually a VET program.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: What do you call that?

Mr De Ruiter: It is part of the three choices they have. It is the middle choice; it is plan C I think! There is the full apprenticeship, the combination of TAFE and work, and TEE.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: You have none of those this year?

Mr De Ruiter: We had one last year and one the year before. It does happen where it is possible for it to happen. A lot of our year 11s and 12s, particularly the boys, take an option to go to Cunderdin if it is available because they are going to come back to the farm. Many others take up the private option of going to Perth.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I thought they were closing Cunderdin Ag. Was there not some talk of them closing the ag colleges?

Mr De Ruiter: Not that Cunderdin is aware of.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Swanlea is closing and Muresk.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes, Muresk.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It was not Cunderdin.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: That is post secondary.

Mr De Ruiter: Yes, it is Curtin.

The CHAIR: Are there any further questions?

Thank you very much, that has been very useful. We will close the session now. You will get a copy of the transcript and an opportunity to review that. There was one supplementary question. Thank you very much for taking the time to come down. I know it is a good drive.

Mr De Ruiter: Anything to support district high schools.

Hearing concluded at 3.31 pm